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FM CABINET OFFICE
TO AIRBORNE 006 IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L
TO AIRBORNE 006 IMMEDIATE
FOR DUTY CLERK AIRBORNE, FOLLOWING FOR ATTEMTION OF
SIR CHARLES POWELL
FROM DUTY CLERK NO 10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister
Paper on Iraqi
withdrawal.
C.P.

REPRODUCED BELOW IS COPY OF NOTE OPD(G)(91) 3 DATED 9 JANUARY 1991

BEGINS

CABINET D
EFENCE AND OVERSEAS POLICY COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE GULF

IRAQI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT: IMMEDIATE REACTIONS
NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

THE ENCLOSED NOTE BY THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE IS
CIRCULATED FOR DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE TO
BE HELD ON THURSDAY 10 JANUARY 1991 AT 9.00 AM

SIGNED RCBIN BUTLER
L V APPELYARD

IRAQI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT: IMMEDIATE REACTIONS

1. THIS PAPER CONSIDERS HOW WE SHOULD REACT TO THE BEGINNING OF AN
IRAQI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT.

2. SADDAM HUSSAIN MIGHT BEGIN TO WITHDRAW FROM KUWAIT BEFORE 15
JANUARY LKOR AFTER 15 JANUARY BUT BEFORE MILITARY ACTION BEGAN). HE
COULD ANNOUNCE THIS OR SIMPLY BEGIN TO EXECUTE IT. HIS AIM MIGHT
BE A GENUINE WITHDRAWAL, BUT EQUALLY IT COULD BE A DELAYING
TACTIC. OR IT MIGHT BE THE BEGINNING OF A WITHDRAWAL THA WOULD
STILL LEAVE HIM IN OCCUPATION OF PART OF KUWAIT. IT MIGHT BE SOME
TIME BEFORE WE KNOW WHETHER FULL WITHDRAWAL WAS INTENDED.

3. IN REACTING TO THIS OUR (BEGIN UNDERLINE) OBJECTIVES (CEASE
UNDERLINE) SHOULD BE:

- TO KEEP OUR MILITARY OPTIONS OPEN AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY THAT
THE WITHDRAWAL MIGHT NOTE BE GENUINE.
- TO ESTABLISH CRITERIAOAGAINST WHICH TO JUDGE WHETHER OR NOT
COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL WAS TAKING PLACE
- TO APPLY PRESSURE SO THAT THE WITHDRAWAL TOOK PLACE QUICKLY. IF
THIS RESULTED IN SOME DISORDER, AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT LEFT
BEHIND, THIS WOULD DO NO HARM.

4. THE ALLIES, OR AS MANY AS POSSIBLE, SHOULD REACT TO THE
ANNOUNCEMENT IF A WITHDR
LAL BY O (BEGIN UNDERLINE) STATEMENT

(CEASE UNDERLINE):

- I) WELCOMING THE FIRST STEPS OF IRAQI WITHDRAWAL, UNLESS THE IRAQIS HAD DECLARED IT TO BE ONLY PARTIAL SEMI CLN
- II) INDICATING THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER THE WITHDRAWAL COMPLETAWZ GZK PGDIL ZGMSOLDIER HAD LEFT KUWAIT (BUT MAKING NO MENTION OF EQUIPMENT) SEMI CLN
- III) ESTABLISHING CRITERIA BY WHICH WE WOULD EVALUATE THE WITHDRAWAL. THE FIRST OF THESE WOULD BE ITS OVERALL SPEED. IRAQ WOULD HAVE TWO WEEKS TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS. SECOND, DURING THAT PERIOD THE IRAQI PERFORMANCE WOULD BE JUDGED AGAINST A SERIES OF MILESTONES, EG THE EVACUATION OF KUWAIT CITY WITHIN 24/48 HOURS, POSSIBLY THE FREEING OF KUWAITI AIRSPACE WITHIN A SIMILAR PERIOD. THIRD, THERE WOULD BE SOME NEGATIVE CRITERIA; WE WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, JUDGE THAT THE WITHDRAWAL WAS NOT GENUINE IF THE IRAQIS BEGAN TO ESTABLISH A NEW DEFENSIVE LINE WITHIN KUWAIT.
- IV) NOTING THAT WE RETAINED THE MILITARY OPTION UNDER SCR 678.
- V) IT IS FOR CONSIDERATION WHETHER WE MIGHT ALSO GIVE A PUBLIC UNDERTAKING THAT IF THE IRAQI FORCES KEPT TO THIS SCHEDULE THEY WOULD NOT BE ATTACKED. THIS WOULD BE AN INDUCEMENT TO SADDAM HUSSAIN TO ACCEPT OUR PROGRAMME.

5. IN PRACTICE THINGS MIGHT NOT DEVELOP IN A CLEAR-CUT WAY. SADDAM HUSSAIN MIGHT REJECT THE TIMETABLE OR THE PATTERN OF WITHDRAWAL WE PROPOSED. OR HE MIGHT MAKE SOME ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE ON THESE. WE SHOULD HAVE TO DEAL WITH THESE COMPLICATIONS AS THEY AROSE. IN ALL CASES THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION WOULD BE WHETHER THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF AN INTENTION TO WITHDRAW RAPIDLY AND COMPLETELY.

OF THE INTENTION TO WITHDRAW COMPLETELY AND COMPLETELY.

6. (BEGIN UNDERLINE) MILITARY ACTION: (CEASE UNDERLINE) ON THE GROUND WE WOULD (BEGIN UNDERLINE) NOT (CEASE UNDERLINE) ATTACK WITHDRAWING IRAQI FORCES. THIS WOULD BE POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE. BUT IF SADDAM HUSSAIN DID NOT KEEP TO THE CRITERIA AGAINST WHICH WE WOULD EVALUATE THE WITHDRAWAL (PARA 4 III) ABOVE) THE MILITARY OPTION WOULD BECOME AVAILABLE AGAIN. WE WOULD NOT HUSTLE IRAQI FORCES AS THEY LEFT. THIS COULD LEAD TO WAR BEGINNING BY ACCIDENT AND IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WERE UNFAVOURABLE TO US (IE WITHOUT A PRELIMINARY AERIAL BOMBARDMENT).

7. (BEGIN UNDERLINE) REOCCUPATION: (CEASE UNDERLINE) WE SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE FIRST FORCES TO ENTER THE EVACUATED PARTS OF KUWAIT WERE ARAB TROOPS, PREFERABLY SAUDIS OR KUWAITIS. WE WOULD WISH TO REINSTATE THE AL SABAH AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY SHOULD RETURN TO KUWAIT CITY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE IRAQI TROOPS HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM IT. WE SHOULD SEEK TO INFLUENCE THE WAY IN WHICH THE RULING FAMILY MANAGED THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE TRANSITION TO NORMALITY IN KUWAIT.

8. A FURTHER PAPER ON STRATEGY FOLLOWING A COMPLETE IRAQI WITHDRAWAL WILL BE CIRCULATED SHORTLY.

(BEGIN UNDERLINE) RECOMMENDATIONS (CEASE UNDERLINE)

9. (A) WE SHOULD CONSULT THE AMERICANS URGENTLY ON THE APPROACH OUTLINED IN THIS PAPER.

(B) WORK SHOULD BE PUT IN HAND ON IDENTIFYING THE MILESTONES

FOR AN IRAQI WITHDRAWAL REFERRED TO IN PARA 4 III) ABOVE.

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